

charlestonmercurymagazine

DEFINITION OF LOWCOUNTRY STYLE



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Karen Ann Myers

BY SAMANTHA ROSE

Karen Ann Myers is an artist, educator and curator currently working as the assistant director of the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art. She also spends time as an adjunct professor at the College of Charleston in the Arts Management Department. Myers received her MFA in painting from Boston University and an BFA in studio arts at Michigan State University. With an educational background strongly rooted in studio art, Myers's passion clearly shows through in her work as each painting tells a story unique to an onlooker. Her work is complex, intimate and personal; it takes the viewer through a psychological journey typically evoking projections of one's own feelings and emotions regarding life experience past,



present and even future.

She describes her paintings as a combination of vulnerability, decoration, sensuality and texture — each of these is expressed with great detail in Myers's works. She is inspired by New York artist Mikalene Thomas, who looks for strong, beautiful and complex women to model for her, according to Myers.

"It's my job, as the artist, to capture their innate quality and translate it into a painting," she said.

Myers's work is as much about the intricacy of interiors and design as it is women in their true form rather than objects. Though Myers does not consider her work to be directly political she feels it is her job to portray the women she paints authentically. This verisimilitude on canvas should include lives that encompass that of the contemporary world and living as a woman in today's society — complex and nuanced.

"No matter how strong someone seems on the outside, an individual always has an air of fragility inside," she said.



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Emerging Artists



All featured artwork by Karen Ann Myers.

Through her work Myers hopes to explore and convey the complexity of woman. Her work is very psychological in nature.

Myers works suggest she shot an image in a perfectly decorated room; however, this is not the case. She plans her paintings to the last detail before she even begins to take a brush to the canvas. Her work starts by taking photographs of her female friends in her studio often replicating fashion photography poses found among the pages of *Vogue* or *W Magazine*. Myers then moves through her collection of textiles and accessories. She may have photographed a headboard here, found a rug, night stand, lamp or dresser there, but the pieces never come from the same place and are rather pieced together on the canvas from Myers's own life or things she has

found and loved. The women are very real, very natural in their state; their backgrounds are the product of Myers's personal taste and what she feels best represents the woman's personality. Myers's work offers a combination of both fantasy and reality.

The response to Myers's work varies greatly and this is exactly what she wants. Some individuals view her work as too provocative and sexual; others perceive and understand her paintings in the same way she wishes them to be seen by the world — as a study of the psychological complexity of women inspired by the cult of beauty in contemporary mass media.

To learn more about Myers and to view more of her work, please visit www.karenannmyers.com.